

Appn. No. 09/655,665
Amdt. dated December 21, 2004
Reply to Office Action of October 4, 2004

PATENT

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowability of claims 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11. Accordingly, claims 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 have been rendered in independent form.

Claims 1-5 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yen et al. in view of May et al. The rejection asserts that claim 1 is an imaging processing apparatus essentially as claimed and that the May reference supplies the omissions in Yen. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The present invention is a method for correction of defects in the case where defect element information is already given. While Yen is an invention in the same general field as the present invention in that it is a technique for correction when there is a defect pixel in the sensor in a digital camera, the May reference is in the field of manufacturing of display arrays, not in the field of generating actual display images; therefore the Applicant submits that it is improper to employ the May reference in this combination. Claims 1-5 and 8 are therefore distinguishable over the cited combination of references.

As admitted by Yen as prior art, the basic principle of the Yen-disclosed correction method is known in the prior art. Also in the prior art is a correction method wherein the quality of an image deteriorates as a result of smoothing of the defective pixel region in the image processed for correction. Yen asserts that its method overcomes such a problem. However, the technique is incomplete.

By contrast, the present invention, as represented by claim 1, as well as by claims 2-5 and 8, presents an inventive technique more easily implemented in hardware and less likely to result in deterioration of image quality than the method in Yen. In particular, the adding of replacement information representing non-replacement of the pixel value to the pixel value when the pixel value of a pixel need not be replaced is not something one of ordinary skill in the art would be led to undertake, since nothing in the field suggests that such could be done at the time of the capturing and processing of an image. Claims 6, 7 and 9-11, recognized as allowable, recite specific techniques to this end.

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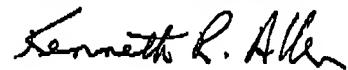
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant believes all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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